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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this lecture is to provide a perspective from which parents and school people can formulate reasoned opinions on what the school's role should be in regard to students' values. The author offers a definition of values and discusses three rough categories of values--esthetic, instrumental, and moral. The school is a creature of the society it serves--in our case, a democracy. Thus, the perspective from which we view questions about schooling and values should include a considered definition of a democratic society. It is important to recognize that teachers/administrators are agents of the society. The society is within its rights in refusing to employ those who would use the school for subversion. But, in light of the earlier discussion of values and pluralism, a decision as to what constitutes subversion may be difficult to make. As agents of the society, the teacher/administrator must be beholden to a conception of democracy that goes beyond responding to strident local interests and prejudices. The basic position--that the school's role is to assist students to develop a basis for their values that is as rational as possible is a basic theme for discussing values and schooling, though there are some variations depending on the types of values under consideration. The democratic commitment to human dignity, especially if students are considered humans, has much to say about what the school should be doing, and what parents should demand it does, about values. (Author/JLB)

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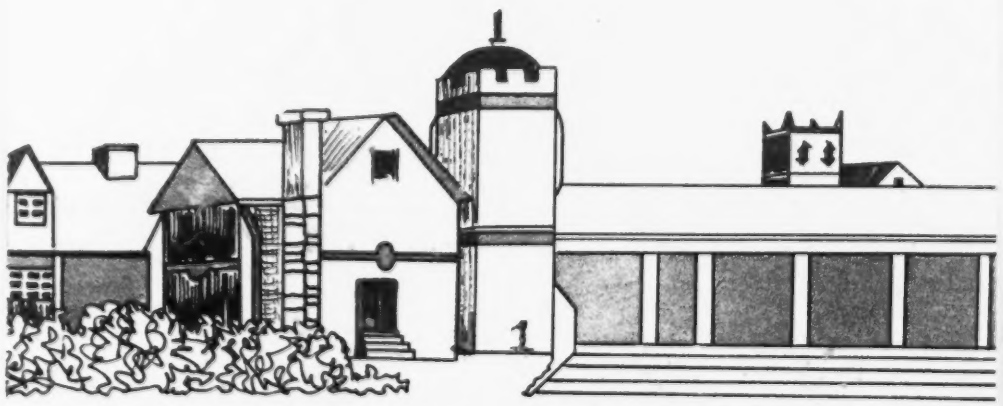

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James P. Shaver

FORTY-FIFTH HONOR LECTURE

Spring 1972

Faculty Association
Utah State University
Logan, Utah

FORTY-FIFTH HONOR LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE UNIVERSITY

A basic objective of the Faculty Association of Utah State University, in the words of its constitution, is:

> to encourage intellectual growth and development of its members by sponsoring and arranging for the publication of two annual faculty research lectures in the fields of (1) the biological and exact sciences, including engineering, called the Annual Faculty Honor Lecture in the Natural Sciences; and (2) the humanities and social sciences, including education and business administration, called the Annual Faculty Honor Lecture in the Humanities.

The administration of the University is sympathetic with these aims and shares, through the Scholarly Publications Committee, the costs of publishing and distributing these lectures.

Lecturers are chosen by a standing committee of the Faculty Association. Among the factors considered by the committee in choosing lecturers are, in the words of the constitution:

> (1) creative activity in the field of the proposed lecture; (2) publication of research through recognized channels in the field of the proposed lecture; (3) outstanding teaching over an extended period of years; (4) personal influence in developing the character of the students.

James P. Shaver was selected by the committee to deliver the Annual Faculty Honor Lecture in the Humanities. On behalf of the members of the Association we are happy to present Professor Shaver's paper:

Values and Schooling: Perspectives for School People and Parents

Committee on Faculty Honor Lecture

VALUES AND SCHOOLING

Perspectives for School People and Parents*

James P. Shaver

One of the most perplexing issues facing school people is posed by the question, "What should the school's role be in regard to students' values?" Some version of that question may even on occasion provoke concern among parents. When they do become involved in related disputes over what the school should be doing — usually as part of an aroused minority reacting to a new element in the school program — parents are likely to make such declarations as, "The school has no business messing with the values of our children!" Individually, they are likely to think, but not say aloud, "The school's decisions and programs should reflect *my* values."

How does one answer such a basic question about the school's role — or, as a school man (or woman), respond to such statements by parents — or, decide as a parent what position to take? There is probably no definitive answer. Yet, a consideration of values, particularly in the context of a democratic, pluralistic society, holds some promise for providing a perspective from which parents and school people alike can formulate reasoned individual opinions that will be both intellectually sound and politically (in the sense of school politics) persuasive. It is to that promise that this lecture is directed,

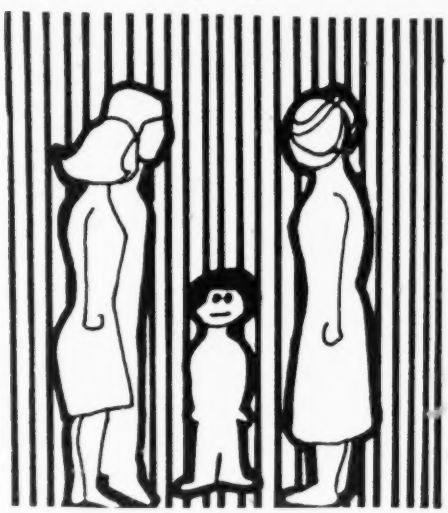
*A grant from the Utah State University Research Council for a project, "Relating the Research on Values to Social Studies Education," aided materially in the preparation of this lecture.

not as a dissertation on the fine points of values and democratic theory, but as an attempt to bring several years of work in the area of values and the school curriculum to bear on a very serious question. It is hoped that what is said will be of some use to those who, as laymen, deal with the institution of schooling as it impinges upon us almost daily.

SCHOOLING, NOT EDUCATION

Perhaps a good place to begin is by drawing a significant and fairly obvious, but often forgotten, distinction between education and schooling. If we associate education with learning, then it is clear that much (some would argue, most) of our education takes place outside of the school. We learn from our parents, other adults, our siblings, our peers, and from our many encounters with the natural world. "Education," to quote from Stephens' (1967) provocative analysis of the school as an institution, "can be as broad as life itself" (p. 20). More appropriately we might say that education *is* life itself.

The school, the formal institution for education, operates within a broad educational context. Outside of skill areas such as mathematics, other people and institutions play a more significant role than the school, perhaps because formalizing education takes away from its "naturalness" and its meaningfulness. Partly for that reason, the school's *opportunity* for impact is less — certainly qualitatively, if not always quantitatively in terms of the numbers of hours spent within its confines.



The position of the school vis á vis other educational influences is an important part of the perspective from which to view the question of the school's role in regard to values — in terms both of what we (school people and parents alike) *ought*

to expect the school to do, and what we can *reasonably expect* teachers and school administrators to accomplish. More of that later. For the moment, it is important to remember that schooling, not education in its broader sense, is the focus of this lecture.

VALUES — A DEFINITION

The other term central to the theme of this lecture should also be defined. "Values" have been defined in numerous ways. We have found it useful in our work (e.g., Oliver & Shaver, 1963, 1966; Shaver & Berlak, 1968; Shaver & Larkins, 1968, in press) to define *values* as our standards or principles of worth. They are the criteria by which we judge things (not just objects, but ideas, actions, and situations as well) to be good, worthwhile, or desirable; or, on the other hand, bad, worthless, or despicable; or, of course, somewhere in between on the continua suggested by such polar concepts.

As criteria or standards, values are ideas; but they are more. They also embody and convey feeling. For example, honesty is a value by which we often judge the actions of ourselves and others. You can describe what you mean by "honest" — that is, what kinds of behavior it entails. So, you have an idea of honesty. But you also have feelings that go with the idea. Not only is it "good" to be honest, but honesty evokes positive feelings on your part; it calls forth an emotive reaction. In that sense, values are both cognitive, or intellectual, and affective, or emotional.

Values, Attitudes, and Biases

Values from this point of view are fundamental aspects of one's personality that should be distinguished from attitudes. An *attitude* (again, as we have found it useful to define the term) is a number of interrelated beliefs and feelings focused on some object (perhaps an action, situation, or concrete thing). We have attitudes *toward* — for example, toward blacks or toward our next door neighbor (who may be *a* black) or toward communism, and so on. Our attitudes are affected by a number of factors, including our factual beliefs and our values — our standards of worth.

Values, then, underlie attitudes, and while each of us has thousands of attitudes, we have fewer values, perhaps several dozen (see Rokeach, 1971).

By the same token, we need to distinguish our *biases* — our leanings, inclinations, or partialities — from the values upon which they are in part, consciously or unconsciously, based. We also need to keep in mind the distinction between *prejudice* — prejudgments, judgments without adequate evidence — and values. Our prejudices, by virtue of the neat trick of psychological compartmentalization, are frequently not consistent with our more deeply held values. Yet, unthinkingly, they often affect our behavior toward children, school people, and parents.

This is not the place to belabor such distinctions. They are, however, important aspects of a perspective from which to consider the central question about the school and students' values. We often fail to make clear in our own minds when our actions as school people toward students or our demands upon the schools as parents are based on prejudice, unconscious bias, or the careful consideration of commitment (values).

Three Types of Values

Keeping in mind three rough categories of values — esthetic, instrumental, and moral — can also be helpful in contemplating our personal positions on values and schooling. *Esthetic* values are those standards by which we judge personal experiences related to pleasure, especially beauty — in art, in music, in personal appearance, in nature, even in cookery. We all make esthetic judgments; the connoisseur or the academician in literature and the fine arts often develops complex judgmental systems. And each of us tends to allow his esthetic values (in regard, for example, to classical music or to hair style) to take on a more serious, moralistic tone. The aesthete is frequently a snob, but prejudice based on unthinking esthetic reactions is common to all of us.

Instrumental values are used to judge performance — whether of equipment (Does an auto accelerate to 60 m.p.h. in twelve seconds or less? Is a chronometer sufficiently accurate?), persons (Are Johnny's study habits adequate for college work? Is the class being sufficiently quiet and orderly so that the teacher's objectives can be accomplished?), or states of affairs (Is this setting sufficiently quiet and attractive that I can work on my lecture?). These are means values. That is, meeting them is a means to another end. In political science, they are sometimes called procedural values. We constantly need to raise questions about the end values sought (speed, attendance at college, the teacher's objectives, the purpose of a lecture);

and, we also need to remember that, like esthetic values, instrumental values often become important in and of themselves.

Thirdly, there are *moral* values. These are standards used to justify decisions of ethics, decisions as to what aims or actions are proper. For example, a person might argue that he shouldn't be forced to go to a bridge party because he prefers not to go. Or, one might judge a person's reaction upon finding a lost purse on the basis of the moral value of honesty. Or, capital punishment might be opposed in the name of a moral value, the right to life.

These three examples illustrate an important point about our moral values. They vary widely in their importance and applicability. At the most trite level are *personal preferences:* "I'd prefer not to go." Sometimes such a statement can be explicated further: "Why not?" "Because I'd rather spend the evening alone." No one (except perhaps the person irritated by the refusal to play bridge) would deny one's right to have solitude as a value. Nor, on the other hand, would the recalcitrant bridge player be likely to argue that that value was a basic right to critical importance to human existence, applicable to all men as a universal value. This is, however, exactly the role that a value such as the right to life is likely to play. It is not a petty preference (petty, not in the sense of importance to one's personal life, but in terms of what happens to mankind), and it is the type of value that we are likely to deem critical in judging whether the actions and aims of people in this society or in others are leading toward a desirable existence for mankind. Such commitments will be referred to in this lecture as *basic values.*

Between the extremes of the right to life and personal solitude fall many values, differing in importance and in the breadth of applicability. Honesty for example, is usually deemed to be more than a matter of personal preference: It is sufficiently important to be the subject of law making; yet, it usually is not thought to be of utmost importance in defining the essential qualities of human existence. Also, some values are not applied to all men. For example, a member of a particular religious faith might judge his fellow church members by the criterion of regularity of church attendance, but be less likely to apply such a criterion to his acquaintances who belong to another church or to no church.

So we can think, again in rough terms, of a continuum ranging from values that are critically important to a conception of humanness and are applicable to all men, to values that are important and which we would like to see as many people as possible follow, to those which are largely a matter of personal preference. It is vital,

as we ask what the school's role should be in regard to students' values, to also ask, In regard to which types of values?

More on the Nature of Values

Other characteristics of our values are integral for a perspective adequate to viewing the school and its function in regard to students' values. But first, a couple of points need to be re-emphasized.

As already noted, categorizing values as esthetic, instrumental, or moral is at best a rough, if useful, business. It may be difficult to categorize some values, and they are likely to shift categories. Especially, as already noted, esthetic and instrumental values often take on the imperatives of moral values. Individuals are shocked when others do not share their tastes in art, music, or personal dress. Children are treated as "bad" because they dare talk without permission in the classroom, without asking whether such talking is really detrimental to accomplishing the ends for which the no-talking rule was established in the first place. On a societal level also, values that seem procedural, or instrumental, in nature — such as a commitment to due process of law — take on the aura of end values. Due process is accepted as good in-and-of-itself — a proper criterion by which to judge laws and the behavior of governmental officials (even of school officials and parents, perhaps?). And, as I shall note shortly, all of the basic moral values in a democracy can be fruitfully thought of as instrumental in at least one sense. The crucial point is that when an esthetic or instrumental value is used as a criterion for an ethical judgment — a judgment as to the properness of aims or actions — we should ask whether we want that transfer in role to occur.

Value Conflict

The lack of clear distinctions between esthetic, instrumental, and moral types of values leads us to another matter, also in-

volving on occasion lack of clarity — the conflicts among our values. In our culture, consistency — at least surface, public consistency — is valued. Politicians are criticized for shifting positions; parents worry about changing their minds in coping with their children from one situation to the next. It is somewhat ironic, therefore, (and the cause of much unconscious psychological manipulation) that our value systems are inherently inconsistent — a fact that we rarely recognize or admit. Examples are not difficult to come by. Solitude may be important to a man — when a bridge party is involved, but what if an invitation to a poker party is received? Honesty is important — but what if your girlfriend or wife asks if you like her new dress — and you don't! In each case, countervailing values are likely to prevail. The right to life is important — but how about those who support capital punishment? Have they no basic values on their side? How about the security of the community or even the right to retribution?

This last example suggests that one way in which our values lack consistency is that shifts in relative importance take place over time. A few years ago, those who argued that the right to life should carry the day in regard to capital punishment were in the minority. Today, with changing court rulings and evidence that executions do not seem to protect the community's security by deterring crime, and perhaps also because of a greater awareness of humanness as a result of various contemporary social movements and the general revulsion over the killing of civilians in the Vietnam War, the right to life has taken on greater valence.

Contending with changes in values over time can be the source of much consternation, especially as one becomes older and supposedly more conservative in his ways. But the fact that inconsistency also exists at any one point in time is more often overlooked and, for that reason, is perhaps more important to a perspective from which to view the school's role in regard to students' values.

Conflict within one's set of values is not a sign of maladaptation, but an inevitable fact of life. On a societal level, this reality was pointed out dramatically by the title Gunnar Myrdal (1944) and his colleagues chose for the report of their epic study of what was then (in the late 1930's and early 1940's) referred to as "the Negro problem" in America. Their title, *An American Dilemma*, was meant to highlight the consternation of a rationalistic, moralistic nation whose treatment of a large segment of its population did not (and does not) square with its basic moral values. In Myrdal's words:

> . . . [O]ur problem is the moral dilemma of the American—the conflict between his moral valuations on various levels of consciousness and generality. The "American Dilemma," referred to in the title of this book, is the ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the "American Creed," where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interests; economic, social, and sexual jealousies; considerations of community prestige and conformity; group prejudice against particular persons or types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook (p. xlvii).

A man says he believes in equality of opportunity as a basic value; yet he hires no blacks in his factory or gives them only menial jobs if hired (to a limited extent an historical example with recent passage of equal employment opportunity laws). Does this mean that equality of opportunity is *not* one of his values? We often say that we can tell what a person values by how he acts. This is true. But the converse — that we can tell by the same act what he does *not* value — is not.

The employer may value equality of opportunity, but he also has more specific values — the right to run his business as he pleases, the approbation of his neighbors, and, as a negative criterion, "uppitiness" ("Blacks are 'uppity' when they want the same job as whites have."). These more specific values, made by the pressures of his immediate environment more salient than equality of opportunity, lead him to act in ways that belie his commitment to equality of opportunity. But that does not mean that equality is not one of his values. (Just as a man's decision to play poker doesn't mean he does not value solitude, or his decision not to tell his wife or girlfriend that her new dress is hideous doesn't mean that he does not value honesty.) In the immediate situation, one value takes precedence over another.[1]

Myrdal emphasized the conflict between "moral valuations on various levels of consciousness and generality"; in particular he stressed the conflict between values on "the general plane" and the "specific planes of individual and group living." But it is essential to remember that, as noted above, as we attempt to apply our values to specific

[1]Myrdal (1944, pp. 1027-1031) included an appendix with an austere title, "A Methodological Note on Valuations and Beliefs." It presents an outstanding discussion of how we manage to make the psychological manipulations necessary to maintain an appearance of a logical order of valuations when, in fact, the values are conflicting. (Also see Myrdal, 1944, p. xlvii.)

situations, conflict also occurs between values on the same level of generality — for example, between those values so basic to our conception of democracy and to which we have such strong commitments that Myrdal (p. vivi) referred to them as the "American Creed." Many will dispute whether there is indeed such a Creed. The basis for that contention, as well as the importance of thinking in terms of a set of basic democratic values — a Creed — as one considers the school's role vis á vis students' values, should become clearer as we move through this lecture.

The discussion of value conflict has to this point been focused on moral values. Conflicts also occur between our esthetic values and between our instrumental values; and, of course, between esthetic and instrumental values (the most effective way of doing something may not be the most pleasing esthetically, or vice versa). When conflicts occur between esthetic or instrumental values on the one hand and moral values on the other, the moral value usually carries the day — especially if it is of a more general level than a personal preference. This may be one reason for our tendency to unwittingly convert esthetic and instrumental values to moral status.

Perhaps also another distinction needs to be made explicit. The discussion to this point has included mention of conflict between the values held by individuals, *intra*personal value conflict. In addition, some of the examples have illustrated *inter*personal value conflict, that is, conflict between values as applied to the same situations by different individuals. Interpersonal value conflict tends to be fairly obvious, especially during arguments, although it can be obscured by the imprecise use of language and by making our value claims appear to be factual claims. Intrapersonal value conflict, on the other hand, is more likely to be overlooked. To recognize our own value inconsistencies and the conflicting implications for our behavior and our expectations for others is extremely threatening; in defense, we keep our inconsistencies from ourselves.

THE DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT

Now it is time to set our concern with the nature of values in the context of a democratic society. The school, as a formal educational institution, is a creature of the society it serves — in our case, what we refer to as a democracy. For that reason the perspective from which we view questions about schooling and values should include a considered definition of a democratic society.

Defining Democracy

What concept of democracy do you bring to your reflections on the school? A common definition is that a democracy is a society which has government by the majority. As examples, we often think of the Greek *demokratia* and the New England town meeting, with some ideal of direct participation by the citizen in mind. Our modern form of government, called a *republic,* fits the majority rule definition of democracy by having each citizen participate in selecting governmental representatives who are responsive to periodic review at the polls. (Of course, in neither the Greek *demokratia* or the New England town meeting did all of the citizens have the opportunity or the will to participate; so unelected representatives made the decisions.) Based on this concept of democracy — that is, majority rule as the key element — we hear people complain, for example, about court decisions limiting prayer in the classroom because "the majority want prayer and, in a democracy, the majority should have its will."

What, however, if a national plebiscite were held on a question such as, "Should all Mormons be executed?" — and the response was a clear-cut majority in the affirmative. Would we say that was clearly a democratic decision to be carried out by the government because it was mandated to do so by a majority vote? Undoubtedly not!

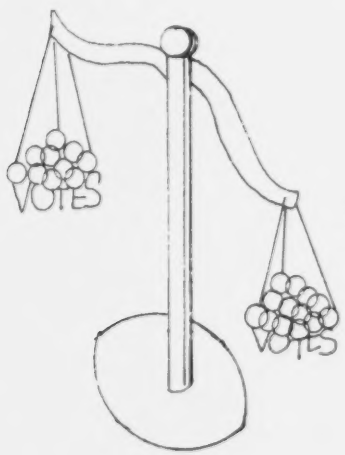
As a matter of fact, of course, even taking such a vote would be an unquestionable heresy to the democratic faith. People (and not only those threatened with extinction) would be quick to respond that democracy involves not only majority rule, but protection for minorities. (And, ironically, many of the same people who argue for prayer in the school on the basis of majority rule would now argue for protection of minorities; a good example of value conflict and the shifting of value commitments as the pinching shoe shifts feet.)

But why majority rule and why protection of minority rights? The clue lies in a common response to the somewhat facetious example of a plebiscite on genocide: "It would be inhumane." Or, "You just don't treat humans that way." Underlying such reactions is an ideal of humanness, that simply being human and an individual demands certain consideration. We have referred to this in our attempts (e.g., Oliver & Shaver, 1966; Shaver, 1964, 1967, 1968; Shaver & Berlak, 1968) to conceptualize the essentials of democracy as a concern for *human dignity.* Each individual is deserving of

consideration[2] because he is human, and equal in that sense, if not in wealth, intellect, or physical prowess.

Majority rule then follows as a weighing of the votes of equals, with the scale shifting according to the *number* of votes on each side. And, minority rights take on meaning as elements in our definition of human dignity. The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to freedom from "despotic" government, to freedom of speech, press, religion, to due process of law, and to equal treatment by the law[3] — such values, especially as spelled out in our basic political documents, along with others such as the right to freedom from hunger and lack of shelter added during the Great Depression, essentially define what we mean by dignity. A person has human dignity when those rights and freedoms are protected.

In this definition of human dignity, basic moral values also function as instrumental values. The defining characteristics are instrumental in two senses: (1) They provide procedural guidelines as they are interpreted by the courts and other governmental agencies; and (2) preserving each helps to maintain the broader concept of dignity. For example, as long as the right to speak out freely is preserved (that is, as long as governmental policies and actions are judged by and forced toward meeting this criterion), it is more difficult for the dignity of individuals to be denied on other matters.



It is worth noting the paradoxical position of our courts, and especially the Supreme Court with its position of ultimate review, in relation to the values in the democratic creed. The other two branches of gov-

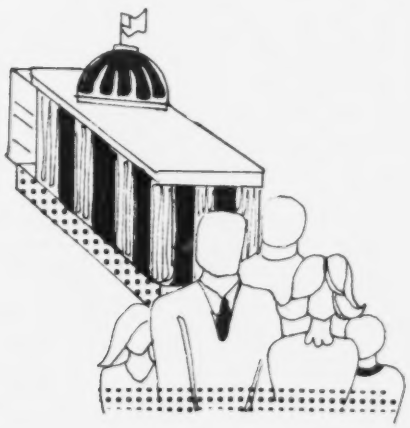
[2]Scriven, 1966, builds a basis for a democratic ethic on the notion of equal consideration. In our own work (Oliver & Shaver, 1966, pp. 46-48), we have recognized the close relationship between equality and human dignity.

[3]Harmon's (1964) excellent analysis raised provocative questions about which of our political values are simply fetish commitments to convention and which are indeeded basic to a conception of democracy.

ernment — the executive and legislative — resting on electoral bases reflect the democratic concern for majority rule; the courts with their unelected judges function to protect the individual and minority rights that are also essential to our conception of democracy. When it exercises this obligation, the U.S. Supreme Court in particular becomes subject to incredibly vituperative criticism.[4] The critics, who would likely be the loudest to cry if their rights were violated, evidence an unfortunate shallowness of understanding of the democratic ethos.

Human Dignity and Intelligence

Another aspect of human dignity that is critical to the consideration of the school's educational function is the ideal of man as an autonomous, intelligent being, on both a personal and societal level. This is not to say that our ideal man is completely free to do as he wishes, nor that he is an unfeeling, unemotional, totally rational being. But he is assumed to have the right to self-fulfillment, to the control of his own destiny,[5] and in making his decisions, emotion and commitment are to be tempered by reflection.



In light of the commitment to intelligence as an essential element of humanness, it is not surprising that a democratic society also believes in the improvability of intellectual abilities and that the

[4]Dahl (1966) has suggested that the evidence is lacking to prove that the U.S. Supreme Court has frequently gone against the wishes of the majority. Extremely vocal minorities may cry out so loudly that it appears a majority have been affronted.

[5]This is a statement of ideal, not necessarily of fact. It raises the question of determinism, of free will, and the extent to which man is free to make choices. These questions are related to the ideal, but the existence of commitment to the ideal is a separate matter. as is to some extent the question of the functionality of the ideal.

school is generally assumed to have responsibility for improving decision-making abilities. The school has been clearly assigned that part of education having to do with formalized thought, as in mathematics. On occasion, school people attempt to move beyond, into the improvement of thinking for everyday life. But, as John Dewey (1916, p. 148) noted, thinking involves risk: Once individuals begin to think, the end product cannot be guaranteed. Trying to improve the thinking skills of young people can, therefore, be dangerous. And school people have found that when they take seriously and act upon the responsibility for improving intelligence outside narrow academic limits, severe criticism is often the result. The reason for this ironic state of affairs becomes clear when we recall the conflicting nature of values and couple that understanding with the notion of a pluralistic society.

Pluralism — A Sine Qua Non *of Democracy*

It is not uncommon to hear people refer to monolithic societies, especially when discussing communist nations such as the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China. The narrow application of such a term to nations containing millions of people is somewhat absurd. With the variety of experiences and backgrounds that individuals have in different regions and social-economic strata, even in China, it is hard to believe that close familiarity with many individuals in any society would reveal "massive uniformity." The same is true, I have found, with small rural communities in Utah that give a surface appearance of being monolithic.

Yet, there is a certain sense in which it is meaningful to talk about monolithic societies, communities when there is a determined drive toward uniformity; in national or local communities, and whether of a political or religious nature, strong, frequently conscious, efforts to subjugate individual differences often do lead to considerable uniformity, at least on the surface. In particular, describing such a society as monolithic makes sense when it is contrasted with another type of society — one that recognizes that people do come from different backgrounds, in part because of religious, economic, and social groupings, and w' h welcomes and encourages (albeit at times with misgiving) the d rsity of opinion that results. It is this latter type of society that is referred to here as *pluralistic*.

Each of us has a set of beliefs — factual and evaluative — about the world that determines how we behave. As Charles Beard (1934) put it:

> Every human being brought up in society inevitably has in mind a frame of social knowledge, ideas and ideals — a more or less definite pattern of things deemed *necessary*, things deemed *possible*, and things deemed *desirable;* and to this frame or pattern, his thought and action will be more or less consciously referred. This frame may be large or small; it may embrace an immense store of knowledge or little knowledge; it may be well organized with respect to categories of social thought or confused and blurred in organization; and the ideal element in it may represent the highest or lowest aspirations of mankind. But frame there is in every human mind. This is known, if anything is known. If the fact be denied, if a large, clarified, and informed frame of purposes is rejected, is deliberately and ostentatiously put out at the front door of the mind, then small, provincial, local, class, group, or personal prejudices will come in at the rear door, occupy the background of the mind, and constitute the frame (p. 182).

The point is that each of us has a frame of reference — what Beard refers to as a "frame of social knowledge, ideas, and ideals" — and that we act in accord with this frame. And, each person's frame of reference is the result of his experiences.

There is a great deal of commonality in experience — among members of the same family, community, social, religious, or occupational groups. Our group affiliations (formal and informal) are fairly reliable predictors of beliefs. But no two people have exactly the same experiences, whether during the particularly formative years as children or during the latter maturing years as adults. Consequently, each has a somewhat different frame of reference. Emphasis on diversity among groups should not be allowed to obscure the fact of inevitable heterogenity within groups.

A society committed to pluralism, as ours is, recognizes the contributions to be made by diversity. Variety may be the spice of life, but the pressure of diverse views in a community serves more important functions — the posing of problems overlooked by people with highly similar outlooks on life, the availability of a greater range of alternatives for handling problems, even the rejuvenation of commitment as clashes with those of unlike mind challenge and force a reconsideration of one's own values. It is this, and not just dissent for its own sake, that Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, himself on occasion a not-too-popular dissenter and defender of individual and minority rights, probably had in mind when he noted: "I do not know of any salvation for society except through eccentrics, misfits, dissenters, people who protest." Because intelligent decision-making is a vital aspect of the core concept of human dignity, pluralism is a *sine qua non* of democracy; for without a variety of

views, decision-making is not meaningful. In a monolithic society, despite the form that may be followed, the result is foreordained and procedures for decision-making are a facade.

Pluralism is, then, necessary for democracy. The recognition and valuing of group and individual differences gives meaning to the decision-making component of human dignity and, in addition, provides an empirical basis for the concern for individual minority rights that acts as a counterweight to majority rule. It is not accidental that in a period of minority group unrest, we find educators (e.g., Nimnicht, Johnson, & Johnson, 1972) calling for a change from a "melting pot" concept of education to a "tossed salad" one that emphasizes the distinctiveness of different cultures and life styles.

But pluralism is not all honey and cream; it creates stresses, too, as has been amply evident in recent years. The strain is reflected in the schools that must serve a pluralistic society. To determine what one's mandates are is not easy for school people — particularly if they are aware of the inevitable influence of their own frames of reference and want their decisions to be more than an affirmation of the prejudices and biases of the particular groups to which they belong.

And, here we come back to an earlier comment on the importance of understanding the intertwining of the nature of values with pluralism in answering, as parents or school people, questions about the school and students' values. Value conflict on an intrapersonal level is due largely to inherent inconsistencies among our commitments. On an interpersonal level, both the built-in inconsistencies and differences in frames of reference contribute to conflict as values are applied as criteria. This is true for esthetic, instrumental, and moral values. But because moral values are more directly relevant to important questions of proper aims and actions for a democratic society, they merit special mention.

Values As a Cohesive Force

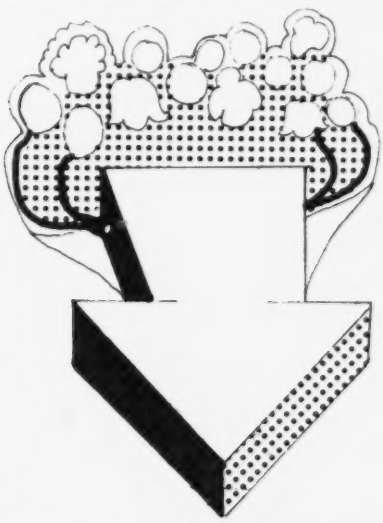
Our basic values are vague. It makes sense to talk about a core of values that makes up a democratic ethos (Myrdal's American Creed) only when one remembers that values do have both cognitive, or intellectual, and emotive, or affective, meaning. People who have commitments in common in the sense that they have similar emotive reactions to a value term, such as freedom of speech, may or may not agree on the value term's cognitive, or intellectual, meaning.

Common commitments are vital to the cohesiveness of a society.

Anthropologists pinpoint the non-intellectual nature of such commitments by referring to them as "projective reality." Such truths are important in the same sense as elements in a religious faith, not because of their scientific verifiability, but because of the affect of their assumed presence.

A common core of value commitments is especially important to a pluralistic society. As well as being cohesive on an emotive level, it provides the basis for confrontation and debate among those with contending points of view. Discussion as a process of communication aimed at resolving differences and coming to acceptable aims and actions is impossible without commitments in common, whether openly recognized or unstated. So, the vagueness of the terms for the core of commitments in the American Creed is functional.

At the same time, conflict arises when the values in the Creed are applied as criteria for judging specific situations, for then their cognitive meaning must be explicated. One person who "feels good" about freedom of speech may think that it means that one should be allowed to say anything he wishes; another person who also "feels good" about freedom of speech may think that it means that people should be allowed to say only that which does not offend others. When four letter words were used by students on the Berkeley campus a few years ago, apparently to p r o v o k e thinking about what appeared to be indifference in our society to the killing in Viet Nam, some saw the students' signs and chants as an outrageous insult. Others saw them as a legitimate attempt to use symbols to jar people into thinking about a moral issue.



But when such conflicts over the cognitive, or intellectual, meaning of a value occur,[6] a person opposed to an action taken

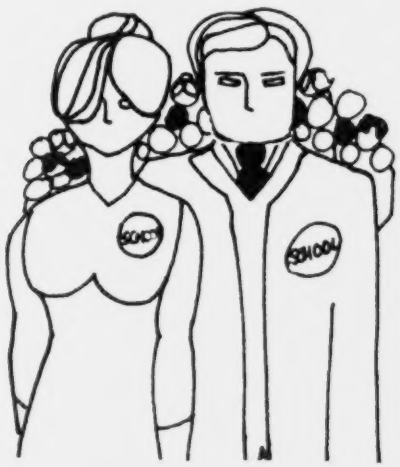
[6]Note that the courts are the institution responsible for providing authoritative definitions of legal-value terms. Again, the nature of their task embroils the courts in heated controversy.

in the name of a value such as freedom of speech does not reject that value, but uses other values to defend his position. Consequently, the so-called "filthy speech movement" which was defended in the name of free speech was opposed in the name of majority rule (preserving the speech standards and the sensitivities of the majority) and law and order (use of such speech was thought to be a flagrant violation of anti-obscenity rules and also might provoke violence).

The value chosen to be emphasized (neither side was likely to deny totally the importance of the value used by the other to support its position) was a function of the frames of reference of the people involved. And these differences in frames of reference are not only acceptable, but valued in a democratic, pluralistic society.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL AND PARENTS

Now, having dealt with some important considerations of perspective, it is time to turn to a most perplexing and potentially perilous matter: What should the school's role be in regard to students' values? To some extent, the temptation has been too great and hints about my prescriptions for that role have been dropped along the way. What follows, then, is an attempt to build on the preceding discussion, emphasizing and underscoring previous points, without, I hope, being overly redundant.



School People as Agents

It is important to approach the question about values and schooling with a clear recognition that the teacher and the school administrator are agents of the society. That is why considerable proportions of this lecture have been devoted to reflections about that society. As school people and as parents contemplating and debating the school's obligations and prerogatives in the area of values, we must constantly

query the meaning of this authority-agent relationship, which is confounded by the fact that individual members of the power-granting authority (the society) are the clients of the agent.

Some implications of the authority-agent relationship bear directly on the values and schooling question. For example, because school people are clearly in an authority-agent relationship with society, a teacher or administrator who accepts a position in a public school but is not committed to the basic democratic ethos of the society has signed a contract under false pretenses. The school is not the place for subversion of the society, in the sense of encouraging or advocating the destruction of the values and basic governmental forms set up, with all their limitations, to protect our conception of human dignity. The society is clearly within its rights in demanding that those who would use the school for subversion not be hired, or that they be fired if discovered after employment.

Obviously, in light of the earlier discussion of values and pluralism, a decision as to what constitutes subversion may be difficult to make. Some of the teacher's legitimate activities in regard to values will be taken by some parents to be subversive — and they will be in one sense, because they involve helping students to think for themselves. The end result may be rejection of some of the parents' value definitions and priorities.

It is of utmost importance, given the conflicting nature of our values and the pluralistic nature of our society, that the teacher who calls to the attention of his students basic values that are receiving short shrift in the local community not be condemned as subversive. For, as agents of the society, the teacher and school administrator must be beholden to a conception of democracy (as attorneys should be responsive to a conception of justice) that goes beyond responding to strident local interests and prejudices. The school person is not a servant of the parents in his district. As an agent of the society, he has a professional obligation to promote education in the broad democratic context, not just to reflect parents' desires.

Such a stand, as any practicing teacher will tell you, can be highly uncomfortable, if not untenable. The power to contract for services is in the hands of local school boards, and they are of and responsive to the local clientele — as they should be. The argument is not that the school program should be taken out of the hands of parents and given over to professional school people. It is rather, that decisions about what the school should be doing should be made in light of its role as an institution of a democratic society and the somewhat paradoxical responsibilities of school people in their

authority-agent, professional-client relationships with parents and students. Understanding this position may make school people more willing to assert themselves against unexamined local prejudices; it should make parents more willing to tolerate if not support school personnel in their exercise of professional responsibility.

Another implication is that as professionals, school people have educational responsibilities that extend beyond the young people in their classrooms or adult education in the usual sense. The school cannot be expected to reform the society that supports it. But, as professionals, school people should be concerned with helping their clients — children and parents — clarify and develop their views of the society and the school's role in that society. In short, the professional responsibility of teachers involves more than educating children in subject matter specialties; it also calls for systematic thought on their part as the basis for interaction, even educational endeavors, with parents in the process of determining what the school's role should be. What a blessing, of course, if parents initially brought to such discussions a perspective — a frame of reference, if you will — that included an understanding and appreciation of value conflict and pluralism in the context of the democratic commitment to human dignity. That they so rarely do points to a major failure of the school as an institution.

Dignity and Values in the School

The democratic commitment to human dignity, especially if students are considered to be humans,[7] has much to say about what the school should be doing, and what parents should demand it does, about values. If one takes seriously the ideal of the human as a thinking, intelligent being with a right to control his own destiny, it is clear that the school's role is not to impose values. Instead, an important aspect of the school's legitimate concern with the improvement of intelligence should be helping students to clarify (and learn how to clarify on their own) the standards they use in making decisions about worth. To be assisted in becoming aware of what one's values are, to be helped to verbalize them, both in terms of intellectual and emotive meaning, to be aided in defining and applying value terms, and to be urged to be aware of the conse-

[7]A comment by a well-meaning friend is of the type that suggests that such a remark is not totally facetious. When I noted that my two children, ages 13 and 15, had enjoyed a recent skiing vacation and apparently had needed to get away from the grind of daily life for a while, he commented, "Well I'm sure. Children are like humans." The undoubtedly unconscious slip of tongue was significant (shades of Freud!). Too often we forget that young people are not *like* humans, they *are* humans!

quences of acting in accordance with certain commitments — these would be valuable services for students and the society.

This basic position — that the school's role is to assist students develop a basis for their values that is as rational as possible, along with the analytic concepts to continue the clarification after leaving school — is a basic theme for discussing values and schooling; but there are some variations to be played on the theme depending on the types of values under consideration.

The School and Esthetics. In esthetics, for example, the school's proper role in the context of human dignity is to expose the student to different esthetic experiences and provide the opportunity for more sophisticated esthetic judgments. There can be no basis for teaching that one esthetic experience is "better" than another; there are no final criteria, for beauty resides in the eye of the beholder. Esthetic values may be different and critical schemes may be more complex, but the aesthete should not confuse sophistication and complexity with ultimateness. To demand that the student adopt esthetic judgments based on a system of values developed from a bias that precludes the very art forms that the student finds pleasurable is not only an unrealistic approach to education, but a denial of the student's dignity. The freedom to arrive at one's own conception of what is pleasurable, after exposure to other forms and the consideration of other criteria, may not be a basic value in the American Creed, but it is consistent with the commitment underlying that creed. Of course, that right to choice must be juxtaposed with other rights; the right to esthetic choice, when expressed as the choice of acid rock music that conforms to a criterion such as a loud, strong beat, might well conflict with someone else's choice of quiet classical music, not to mention his right to peace and quiet.

Unfortunately, music, art, and literature teachers have a tendency to forget that their esthetic judgments depend on a set of assumptions not shared by many others, including a goodly number of their students. Their classes sometimes take on a preachy tone and an implicit, if very obvious, rejection of student esthetic values. Freedom from attempts by esthetic enthusiasts and sophisticates to impose their standards should be a by-word of democratic schools.

Instrumental Values — The Need for Dialogue. Instrumental values call for a somewhat different tack. As with esthetic values, the school person should take care that subtle transitions from instrumental to moral do not take place. In addition, as with other values, the school should help the student build as rational a base as possible for his own instrumental values. This would include involving the

student in considering means-ends relationships, as well as asking what end values underlie the student's instrumental ones and whether he has unknowingly let his instrumental values take on the tone of moral imperatives.

This type of critical examination needs to be turned inward on the school as well. Many of the standards applied in the school setting are instrumental, and self-examination is badly needed. Has a criterion of classroom behavior such as having children in their seats and quiet (often applied as the principal peeks through the door on a brief hallway excursion) taken on value of itself? Is such a standard actually functional in terms of the end values (the purposes and objectives) of the school, and therefore worth retaining? Are esthetic values, such as used in judging hair length or dress styles, being applied as if they were instrumental values without examining the underlying assumption of functional relationships?

The professional staff of each school or school district should undergo a critical self-assessment of its instrumental values. They then will be ready to show basic respect for the students by explaining to them the functional nature of the instrumental values of the school, instead of simply insisting on conformity. The justification to students of the school's instrumental values in terms of assumed consequences will necessitate that the purposes of the school be confided to the student. This is not a ridiculous proposition as it is the student who is the object of those goals. A new feeling of self-respect would be a likely outcome if students were also asked to consider what the goals should be for *their* education.

If involvement in justifying values is undertaken as a serious dialogue and not as a ruse to dupe or seduce students into conforming, students must be allowed to question the assumptions underlying standards without condescension or threats of retribution from school people. In addition, they must be helped to develop analytic modes of thought for identifying problems and arriving at reasoned decisions.

The kinds of issues about school management with which students will initially be most concerned will vary from time to time. Currently they might involve such questions as: Will long hair lead to a breakdown in the school's educational environment? Or, at what point is deviant clothing likely to disrupt learning? Whenever we treat young people as humans capable of thought, we are likely to find our conclusions challenged. This is an uncomfortable position for those who have relied on an authoritarian relationship to maintain their "superior" position over their students. Yet, in the long run,

the sincere involvement of students in establishing the school's instrumental values would not only be in line with our commitment to human dignity, but it could help to make the school a much more meaningful and less inimical institution for the students. Among other outcomes, the change in relationship between student and institution might also make the job of teaching more pleasant for many people.[8]

Moral Values — The Crux of the Matter. The school's approach to moral values should be along somewhat the same lines as those proposed for esthetic and instructional standards, but with some significant differences. Clearly, the school has the same obligation as with esthetic and instrumental values to assist the student in developing a basis for his moral commitments that is as rational as possible. This holds true for the range of moral values from personal preferences to the basic values in the Creed.

There are many facets to an adequate values education program. A basic element simply is getting students to clarify what they believe their commitments to be (see, e.g., Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966). A major emphasis particularly in moral values education, however, must be the recognition of value conflicts — in personal preferences, in the middle level values (such as honesty) that are so important to relations with others, in the basic moral values that are used to justify decisions about personal and broader societal questions of proper aims and conduct. If students were made aware that value conflict is always latent, that having to confront value dilemmas is not a sign of malfunctioning, and if they were helped to learn to weigh values — for example, in terms of the consequences of following conflicting commitments — they would be likely to make more rational decisions. They also would be less likely to need to use the psychological mechanisms for avoiding the recognition of inconsistency that result in incredible, unrecognized violations of values on the personal and social levels.

The search for value conflict is particularly important in the application of basic values to the justification of political-ethical decisions (ethical decisions made and carried out in the political arena). In our own curriculum work (e.g., Shaver & Larkins, in

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[8]Dewey (1916, p. 159) commented that "teachers would find their own work less of a grind and a strain if school conditions favored learning in the sense of discovery and not in that of storing away what others pour into them . . . it would be possible to give even children and youth the delights of personal intellectual productiveness. . . ." In short, the point here about accepting students as fuctioning humans applies not only to the justification of instrumental values but to the total orientation of the school curriculum.

press), we have taught students to always look for the basic value or values that support the positions of those with whom they disagree — or to look for the basic values being relied on by the protagonists on an issue. The outcome for which we teach is a "qualified decision" — one that takes into account the negative consequences of a policy or action being supported (for example, the recognition by a supporter of an open housing law that there will be negative affects on owners' property rights) and the circumstances under which one would change his position (for example, if anticipated financial losses to property owners were beyond a certain magnitude).

Note that the emphasis is on coming to a decision. Focusing on conflicting values should not be allowed to become an avenue for avoiding the making of a decision, or for arguing that anyone's decision is as good as anyone else's. One can say, for example:

> In the dispute over racial segregation, the Negro's claims for integration are supported by our commitment to brotherhood, the equality of opportunity, and to equal protection of the law. By the same token, however, the segregationist's position has been defended in terms of freedom of association, of property rights, and even of the right to local control in such matters. Each of these is an important American value (Shaver, 1965, p. 327).

This description of the value dilemma in one societal decision does not argue that "each defendant's claim in a clash of values must be given equal consideration," nor is it an example of "relativistic thinking" (Johanson et al., 1971, p. 9). Taking into account the society's conflicting commitments, as well as one's own (on an intrapersonal basis, each of us tends to be committed to the values cited on both sides of the segregation issue) is a strategy for arriving at sounder positions. It is not an inevitable road to relativism.[9]

In a democratic society, both sides of an issue are due consideration. That does not mean that differing positions automatically take on equal weight. Judgments can be made about the complexity and soundness, and therefore the acceptability, of students' position statements (Newmann & Oliver, 1971, pp. 278-284; Oliver & Shaver, 1962). For example, the consequences of following one value or another can be examined — what might be the impact on the type of society in which we live — using the ideal of human dignity or

[9]Oliver and I (1966, p. 50) have argued that the relativistic position on values is an inappropriate and unproductive basis for curriculum work in a democracy.

a similar one such as Scriven's (1966) equal consideration as the long range goal. Many, if not most, value conflicts can be resolved in this manner. And, the result points toward action, not away from it.

In many cases, of course, it is not obvious that the pursuit of one or another of the conflicting values will enhance human dignity more in the long run. Or put differently, that judgment will depend upon one's frame of reference. Although the teacher will want to emphasize that it is important to make some decision (the world does not sit still because value dilemmas are hard to resolve and decisions are difficult to make), his task will be to be certain that the student is being as rational as possible, not to insure any one answer.

One qualification must be entered. Sometimes the violations of basic American values are so gross, as with our treatment of blacks and women, that a teacher can only be seen as derelict in his duty if he maintains that his role is only to point out both sides of the issue. This might seem obvious if a history teacher did not comment on the moral beastiality of the Nazi's "final solution" to the "Jewish problem." Many parents would, perhaps, be amazed at the frequency with which this piece of history is either not treated in class or discussed as historical fact without expression of moral repugnance. The avoidance of responsibility may not seem so obvious (think back to the earlier discussions of prejudices and of conflict between specific and general values) when the fact that members of a minority group find employment, education, and housing widely denied them on the basis of skin color (or sex) is treated (if not avoided altogether) in class as an interesting bit of sociological data.

Inculcation and Dignity. Proposing that the teacher not hesitate to point out and even condemn extreme violations of human dignity (even though they, too, are justified in this society by reference to basic values) raises specifically the issue of the appropriateness of value inculcation. It is, however, to a large degree a red herring. It has already been noted that, as damaging as it may be to the ego of some school people, parents tend to over-estimate the school's power to shape their children, especially outside of the specific skills areas such as mathematics (even with all the instruction devoted to grammar, the speech patterns of home and community generally have sufficient staying power to resist modification). The school, and in particular individual subject areas in the curriculum, has limited influence as compared to the powerful reinforcers available to parents and peers. In fact, most of the school's attempts at inculca-

tion of values — as in the esthetic areas of music and literature — only establish and then confirm the student's image of school people as rather well-intentioned individuals, but bumbling and out of contact with reality.

Although there are some individual exceptions, school people generally lack the genuiness and the relevance to impose values on students. Instead, their posturing alienates the young. When, however, teachers can grant students the respect that allows sincere dialogue, the power of insight is such that value clarification in regard to matters of importance to the student (and this includes significant social issues) can have a great impact (see, e.g., Raths, et al., 1966).

What about the Parents? The thrust for rationality may be even harder for parents to tolerate than inculcation. The human dignity-rationality position insists, for instance, that the teacher must not always insist that "Honesty is good," but ask such questions as: "What is meant by honesty?" "What may be the consequences of not being honest?" "Under what circumstances (i.e., when confronted with the violation of what other values) could one legitimately choose not to be honest?" This pattern of questioning would obviously be particularly vital in dealing with the basic values of the American Creed.

In a democratic society, parents should not only tolerate such inquiry, but should encourage it as a legitimate educational function of the school, one that is not likely to be carried out elsewhere. The home is a difficult environment for critical inquiry into values: The relationships are too complex, too fraught with emotive power; it is too difficult for the parent in his intense relationships with his children to stand off from his own frame of reference and ask questions that are not subtle reminders of what the child ought to believe. Moreover, our concept of human dignity demands that, as important as the home may be as the root of one's values, some broader context for value development is crucial — not just in the interests of the society, but for the good of the maturing individual. Kahlil Gibran (1923) has expressed, as only a poet could, the heart of the meaning of human dignity for child rearing:

> Your children are not your children.
> They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
> They come through you but not from you,
> And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
. . . . . .

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness. . . .

The implications are potent for values education in and out of the home. What, for example, is suggested about the basis for the frequent alienation of child and parent? Do parents unjustifiably deny the essential dignity of the young by trying to mold them in their own image rather than "shooting forth the arrow"?

Basic Values — A Difference. Special note must be taken of the issue of inculcation in regard to the basic values in the Creed. School people, as agents of the democratic society, have special obligations to these values. The school in a pluralistic society has no business imposing lesser values, even if it could; but it is obligated to teach the basic values of the society.

This "teaching," because of the important cohesive function of the Creed, must legitimately involve the development of emotional commitment, especially at the elementary school level. The use of literature and other materials that exemplify men's dedication to and the importance of our basic democratic values (such as dramatizations of the John Peter Zenger free press episode) should be an important part of the curriculum (see Oliver, 1960; Shaver, 1968).

Again, the issue of inculcation is likely to be an unfortunate distracter. Most of the emotive commitment to the basic values comes outside the school. Also, concurrent with any efforts at inculcation, values education in a democracy must also entail setting the values in a rational context, including awareness of the conflicts among them. The teacher, from elementary school on, should help the student to verbalize his commitments and give them the value labels (such as "equality of opportunity") of adult discourse.

The student should be challenged to expand the meaning of his values through the pursuit of questions about the consequences of acting on the basis of different values, by considering society's attempts through its government to define the values (such as are embodied in legislation and court decisions), and by the drawing of analogies to the student's own life which is in a real sense a microcosm of the broader society's concerns and conflicts.

The use of analogy in this way is a powerful tool for value clarification. Relationships with one's peers and between young people and authorities tend to be, or could be, construed in terms of the basic values. The standard of due process, for example, can be clarified by applying it to the school's handling of discipline problems. Concepts of equality of opportunity or equal treatment by the law can be developed and clarified by analogy to "fairness" in sports — in the selection of team members in the first instance, and unbiased refereeing to the second.

Here, as in expressing rightful (not righteous) indignation over major violations of basic values, the teacher must be careful that he does not knowingly or unknowingly attempt to impose his own value interpretations. Recall that the strength of the basic values as a cohesive force for society is their vagueness in conceptual meaning; the teacher has no right to indoctrinate specific meanings that reflect his particular niche in the pluralistic panorama. This amounts to a caution that teachers must discriminate between value commitments and the policies they suggest. The obligation to insist that ethical decisions be construed in terms of basic values should not be taken to include the freedom to insist that particular political actions be valued. As a citizen, each teacher has the right to full political participation outside the school (a right that parents and school administrators would do well to remember more often), but no right to use his classroom as a soapbox for political purposes.

The teacher who uses his classroom for political advocacy opens himself to legitimate dismissal. The decision to fire a teacher on that ground should be made hesitantly, however. Among other things, the difference between the sustained pressure of advocacy and the occasional nonpolemic expression of one's opinion should be kept in mind. The latter may be an important pedagogical move, especially if requested by one's students. One of the school's problems is that teachers often seem plastic to students. If a teacher is unwilling to let his students know where he stands, he loses authenticity, for young people believe that commitment is important. Moreover, if the teacher has developed in his students the skills of critical

inquiry and if he has established a classroom atmosphere of mutual respect in which he and his students are mutual searchers for rationally based, and often different, decisions, there is little concern that his ideas will be unduly imposed on his students (see Shaver, 1970, in press).

The School as an Autocratic Institution. The notion of classroom dialogue between a professional and clients who share respect for one another presents an appropriate place for some comments on the school's application of basic values. It is ironic that the school in a democratic society is one of the more authoritarian institutions of that society. This paradox compels attention not only because the school might rightfully be expected to provide a model for the application of democratic ideals as an educational experience, but because students are humans to be treated in accord with the democratic ideal of human dignity. Examples such as the following (Silberman, 1970) are all too common:

> ITEM: A high school senior—eighth in a class of 779, active in a host of extracurricular activities (student marshals, General Organization, Key Club, after-school tutoring program, president of the Debate Society, among others), and described on the school's record as "intelligent, highly motivated and mature," with "excellent leadership and academic potentials" —is barred from the school's chapter of the National Honor Society on the grounds of poor character. At an open meeting of school board candidates the preceding spring, he had politely asked a question which implied some criticism of the high school. In the opinion of eight of the Honor Society's fifteen faculty advisers, none of whom had been present at the meeting in question, none of whom had ever met the boy in question, criticism of the high school is equivalent to disloyalty, and disloyalty constitutes bad character. The seven faculty advisers who do know the youngster fight for his admission but are overruled.
>
> ITEM: (from the Montgomery County, Maryland, Student Alliance Report): "In the way of a few examples: one student who insisted that he would protest against the Vietnam War in front of the school was told by a vice-principal that if the student persisted the school official would see to it that he could not get into college. . . . Another high school student, a National Merit Scholarship Finalist, as it happened, was told by his counselor that he would get a bad recommendation for college because he was a 'nihilist.' He had been arguing with her over the values of the county school system."

The confusion of esthetic with moral values and the lack of clarity about instrumental values that lead to the unreasonable appli-

cation of often rather foolish hair and dress standards should be sufficient matter for concern in a democratic society; but the denial of the right to dissension and freedom of speech is appalling. It is unfortunate, but highly significant, that the courts have had to tell us — in reinstating students who had been dismissed from a school in Iowa for wearing black armbands protesting our involvement in Vietnam[10] — that students are "persons under our constitution" and do not lose their rights as citizens by attendance at a public institution of education.

The situation of the school is not an easy one. The distinction between education and schooling is particularly pertinent to its predicament. After elementary school, which often has a tremendous impact on young children because it is a new mode of life and introduces them to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, the school becomes all too often a retentional institution. Less learning takes place (except informally about such things as the futility of the school as an institution) than most of us — students included — often care to admit.

The "holding tank" concept of the school is rarely talked about openly. Yet it is clear that the school serves as a solution to other than education problems for the society. The need to keep young people out of the labor market, to forestall the time of mature independence in a period of affluence when the labor of young people is a threat to the economic well-being of their elders — these factors, and the tendency to keep them below the surface so that they do not have a direct impact on considerations of what the school should be about, underlie much of the school's irrelevance for students.

To fully appreciate the school's uncomfortable current position, caught in the throes of young people's demands for democratization, one must take into account the society's ambivalence and lack of clarity about the giving of adult status to young people. How can (should?) a modern society handle the transformation from childhood to full adult status when more adults are not urgently needed (except, as some of the young claim, to die in the elders' wars) as they were in yesteryears? Granting the vote to eighteen-year-olds was a gesture toward adult status for the young. It is probably no coincidence that that action came during a period of vast and sometimes startling increase in awareness on the part of the young. Greater exposure to the world through travel and tele-

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[10]*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District.* 393 US 503, (1969).

vision and increased sense of self and moral sensitivity are all obviously present. They no doubt bear an intricate cause and effect relationship to the growth of groups such as the hippies, who rejected the pat pursuit of an economically oriented life, and to our moral uneasiness about the war in Vietnam, with its killing of innocent civilians and the "flower of our youth" (to quote President Johnson).

Even with the vote, our modern society has no *rite de passage* — the killing of a wild beast, a slashing of the chest after a fortnight in the jungle, or circumcision for males or defloration or early marriage for females — to mark quickly and clearly (for both the individual and the society) the transformation from childhood to adulthood. This attenuation of acceptance to mature status, with so much time spent (largely involuntarily — and boringly, if not painfully) in school as society's unexamined and largely unspeakable solution to the problem, confronts school people with special kinds of difficulties. Their own frequent fears of young people and the need of some to exert authority for personal satisfaction, both of which make it difficult to deal with young people in an open, respectful manner, do not help school people in confronting the situation. Nor is it of any great assistance that parents often share the same fears and needs, and so tend to identify with the school's side of the struggle out of sympathy from their own attempts to cope with young people who demand independence and self-esteem as their elders rarely thought of doing.

Receiving the vote — one sign of adulthood — has reduced somewhat the visible span of time in limbo between childhood and acceptance as an adult. But it has not reduced the ambiguity in a significant qualitative sense — especially for the school. There are still many disconcerting years there for many youth — whose maturity, in the sense of awareness and concern beyond themselves and the local community, exceeds

that of their parents; who are restless and impatient because their youthful exuberance and conviction are now coupled with an increased sense of maturity and impotence; who are capable of constructive work but have no jobs, and so are caught in relatively unproductive servitude to their parents and the school; and, who, with their increased awareness, find it difficult to submit meekly and unthinkingly to authority.

It is fairly obvious that this discussion of the strain between school and student has focused largely on adolescents. However, Friedenberg's (1959) reminder in *The Vanishing Adolescent* is even more poignant today: If adolescence is taken to be the time when one is searching for self-identity, there is no longer a clearly demarcated adolescent stage among our young. The conscious search for identity goes on at much earlier an age than many adults can believe, caught as we are in our reflections about our own early years.

It does seem fairly easy, nevertheless, to discern a distinct upturn in physical maturation at about the seventh and eighth grades. But this developmental upswing has little significance for the respect due the student. That is, being at an earlier stage of physical development, which may not mean lower emotional stability, is no excuse for denying respect to younger students. The notion that dignity calls for respect of the individual, for freedom in developing commitments, with assistance in value clarification and definition rather than imposition, is as applicable to elementary school students as to secondary ones. There is no magic point at which the child moves from being a lower animal to being a human; he is always a human in the process of becoming — at sixty-five as at six, although not as noticeably so. To the extent that there are differences in emotional or intellectual sophistication, adaptions in the form of schooling are appropriate — such as adopting procedures which call for more and more self-responsibility as the student progresses through the grades — but they always should be contemplated and made in the context of dignity.

Ironically, most elementary school teachers are more concerned with children than with subject matter, and so are more aware of the child as a person than are secondary school personnel. Nevertheless, the lack of a clear conception of the role of the school in a democracy, on the part of administrators, parents, and teachers, has frequently deterred elementary teachers from exercising important responsibilities in helping students develop their rational bases for self-fulfillment.

Note also that an argument for an instructional program and

for the administrative handling of students on the basis of the democratic ideal of human dignity should not be taken as a plea for permissive schools. This stand is quite different from conceiving of children or youth as nature's animals who should go unfettered so that their personalities will not be ruined. That position can be as disrespectful[11] as the current autocratic structure of the school. Rules, guidelines for behavior, are still needed, as they are in the "adult" society. But as there, even if imperfectly, the rules need to be developed (legislated) and applied (enforced) in a context of dignity and mutual respect. The forms may not, and probably cannot be the same for the adult society and the school; but to the extent that the school's rules and administration are consciously shaped by democratic ideals there can only be improvement.

The nature of the professional-client, teacher-student relationship must also be kept in mind. A call for mutual respect should not be taken to imply the denial or the disparagement of the teacher's professional competencies or responsibilities. To the contrary, one of the arguments against democratic schooling is that it demands too much of the teacher and the school administrator — as well as of parents. One cannot expect school people, so the counter-argument goes, to have the intellectual competencies and the ability to step out of their own frames of reference that are required by the value clarification process, or the patience and understanding to explore rules with students and apply them in a democratic manner.

Actually, however, we can expect no less of our teachers. With the current oversupply of teachers, we could begin to insist that we have in the classroom only persons who feel and evidence concern and respect for youth. The amount of college coursework in subject matter areas and in pedagogy may be easier to assess, but is probably less pertinent as a qualification for educating youth. There are some indications from educational research findings that teachers' personalities and value systems are at least as strongly related to student achievement and interest in science as is subject matter background (see, e.g., Rothman, 1969). Employing teachers whose personalities are congruent with the society's commitment to dignity can be expected to have a learning pay-off at the same time that it improves the general environment of the school.

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[11]A. S. Neill's *Summerhill* (1960) is a thoughtful plea for permissiveness based on the value of dignity and respect for the individual. Although Neill goes further in his recommendations than is probably feasible for public schools (or for the personnel of many private ones), the basis for his approach is significantly different from that of the sympathetic bleeding heart whose benevolent ministrations deny children the respect due them.

Obviously, too, another constraint is that any school reform based on the model of democracy advocated here must exemplify the concept of value conflict. The reformers would not demand total freedom for youth, but a balancing of rights against rights, or perhaps more appropriately, of rights against responsibilities. Applying our basic values to decision-making in the political-social context raises difficult questions; that will also be the case in the school. Questions such as, When does one student's freedom of expression — through speech or other symbols such as hair or clothes — interfere unduly with another student's right to an orderly, quiet educational atmosphere? are not easy to answer. But they must be raised and confronted as part of the educational process. Students must be involved in dialogue and allowed to assist in making decisions cast in the recognition of value conflicts and the consideration of the consequences of following one value criterion as against another.

As long as school people and parents make decisions and impose them on the young, it is hardly realistic to insist on responsibility to self and to others; responsibility assumes the freedom to make mistakes (which, of course, adults do all the time, but rarely admit to their youthful subordinates). Few would advocate turning the young loose in the school without guidance; but when the consequences do not seriously affect other persons or, if personal, do not involve serious threat to life, limb (as with a young child playing with fire), or future happiness (a judgment we should always be chary of making for others), it would be better to err in the direction of permitting blunders — in part for the learning involved. We must insist that the student live with the consequences of his decisions. If bailed out of any difficulties by a well-meaning (but disrespectful) adult, he will learn little about responsibility. In addition, the dialogue among students, teachers, and administrators must include the weighing of the value of independence against the ideal of maturity of judgment.

SUMMING UP

The classroom could be an exciting, meaningful place for youth (beyond the initiatory stages of elementary school), rather than a place to mark time fulfilling arbitrary and irrelevant assignments[12]

[12]Not so, of course, to those students who are oriented toward dealing with abstractions, particularly in the subject areas of the school. Academician-parents must be cautious in their judgments about the proper ingredients of schooling. Their children, as a result of the atmosphere in the home, are more likely to value conceptualizing for its own sake. Intellectual masturbation is an all-too-frequent

while waiting to become an "adult." School people have too long ignored their basic responsibility as agents of a democratic society to maintain an institution whose processes are modeled on democratic ideals and whose curriculum reflects the democratic concern with dignity and rationality. Parents, with their pressing concern for socializing their offspring in their own image, have often been too tolerant of the school's deviations from democratic norms. Partly out of self-interest, they have leaned toward over-respect of the school, and as a corollary demanded compliance and obedience toward the institution and its personnel at the expense of the self-respect of the child. A redress of balance is needed, not as retribution for the school's past sins, but to bring the institution in line with the ideals of society it serves. Only then will the school be able to tolerate and help shape the aspirations of youth in line with the promise of our democratic commitment to human dignity.

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source of pleasure among those who consider themselves the "intellectual elite"—which, of course, they belong to because they define it themselves in terms of abstract conceptualizing, rather than the type of intellectual problems that businessmen and other non-academicians commonly deal with in their daily lives. College-bound students (which most of the children of academician parents are) are likely to conform even though they see school programs and classroom assignments as empty requirements to be fulfilled at whatever level necessary to obtain another goal—entrance to college, where, it is hoped, formal education will be meaningful.

On the other hand, it is also worth noting that university professors, particularly those in the social sciences, are likely to be more liberal in their political beliefs than is the general public. Personal experience indicates that such people are more likely than many to see the repression of their children by the schools as a more compelling concern than the form of academic achievement.

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